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Native voter woes

By Will Nicholls

Quebec politics never lacks for drama. And though most observers expected the Liberals to win April 7, it was certainly an interesting election night in Quebec. Few would have predicted how badly the ruling Parti Québécois would lose, or that Premier Pauline Marois would lose her own seat and resign as party leader that night.

Closer to home, neither did we expect the apparent snub served up to Cree voters by Elections Quebec, which seemed to go out of its way to deny critical voting information to voters in Eeyou Istchee.

The only print media serving Eeyou Istchee did not initially receive any advertising telling Crees how and where to vote, despite the fact that Cree voters represent over 34% of the electorate in the Ungava riding. It wasn't until we said that we were going to issue a press release that Elections Quebec purchased a half-page ad. The Cree Radio Network serving all of the same communities received no ads at all.

Facebook conversations revealed the damage of this official neglect as many Crees used the forum to complain they didn't know where to vote while others weren't even on the electoral list. One Cree in Montreal said he would have liked to know about advance polls, voting by proxy or mail but didn't have the information.

Interest in this election among Crees was high, certainly because of the Charter of Values and threat of a referendum on sovereignty. Despite the negligeance on the part of Elections Quebec, Cree turnout almost doubled this election to 2,239 who cast ballots – compared to 1,195 in the 2012 election. Still, that's less than a quarter of the roughly 9,000 Cree who are eligible to vote.

Imagine, however, how many Crees would have voted had Elections Quebec adequately informed them how to participate in this election. Many Cree residents of the Ungava riding needed the information as soon as the election was called. There is a large part of the population that carries on the traditional pursuits of trapping, hunting and gathering away from sources of information. Many others work away from their communities, including mine workers who are on-site for 10 days or more before they get rest periods to return home. Still others are students down south who wanted to cast their vote but didn't know how.

Given that Elections Quebec partnered with the Quebec Community Groups Network to encourage English-speaking youth to vote it seems to be different for encouraging the Cree vote. I hope this critical oversight was not intentional.

This hope doesn't exist on the federal level, where the Conservative government is intentionally engaging in voter suppression with its so-called Fair Elections Act. Bill C-33 will disenfranchise many communities, but especially Aboriginal voters.

The Assembly of First Nations identifies two areas of concern. One is that voter identification cards would no longer be proof of residency. Some First Nations communities have situations in which several families numbering 20 or more people live in a single house. It would be impossible for most of them to have a document with their address on it. A single home only gets so many bills.

The second problem concerns people lacking approved identification; they would no longer be able to have an identified voter vouch for them. Many First Nations people across Canada do not have more than a status card. People living on $320 a month often don't have bank accounts, driver's licenses and other identity documents that most Canadians take for granted.

"This will only further put up barriers for Aboriginal people," observed Teresa Edwards, a Mi'kmaq who serves as legal counsel for the Native Women's Association of Canada. "It can't help but make someone wonder, is that the intent? Is this really democracy or is the intent to actually limit Aboriginal voting in the next election?"

That's a question we should ask of both the Quebec and Canadian governments.

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Ashes to ashes

By Joshua Iserhoff

I have decided that my remains will be cremated after I pass away. I signed my name on the dotted line to donate my organs to science, or to a cooler. Whichever, I want my delicacies to keep thriving and hopefully they'll one day be an essential part of an elected Eeyou/Eenou premier of Quebec or the Editor-in-chief at *Vanity Fair* magazine!

I recently went on a trip to the Bahamas and nestled my head on the magnificent sandy beaches of Nassau. But nothing could prepare me for Exuma (only about an hour-and-a-half ride on a speed boat from Oprah's gated Paradise Island). Laura, Reggie and I couldn't believe how wonderful and majestic it is. If you like crystal-clear water you will love Exuma. Gwyneth Paltrow and her "conscious uncoupling" beau were next to "our" island. I tried calling them but they had gone sailing that afternoon. I am guessing that they couldn't reach me either?

If you like privacy and people who mind their own business, Exuma is your answer. No, I wasn't paid to write this. But the reason I've opted for cremation is that I want a portion of myself to be scattered at Exuma. Also, a teaspoon at Gobanji, a tablespoon at Champion Lake, and secretly, I want to be liberally sprinkled throughout Holt Renfrew. I'm not done with the list. I still plan to live many more years and add places. But first, let me take a #selfie.

I am writing to you at an altitude of 19,000 feet aboard a plane operated by our beloved Air Creebec. Sitting in front of me is an Anishnabe celebrity, CBC journalist Duncan McCue. I befriended him on Facebook when he visited Chisasibi as a motivational speaker at the Roundtable. We're BFFs now, though Duncan has yet to comment on any of my selfies.

If you didn't know, he lived in Chisasibi for many years. George and Nellie Pachanos adopted him. He is an honourary Eeyou. So much that he has a scar from Nellie's April. She apparently bit him.

Duncan has an impressive résumé: he is lawyer by training but journalism is his passion. He represents well as an Aboriginal journalist on CBC, probably because he follows me on Twitter! His story about Aboriginal hockey star Chris Simon made me cry. Any grown man crying on TV? I go into the ugly cry.

It's been two weeks now since we've been Liberal. The Montreal *Gazette* seems to have shifted to other stories. Deep down, I do miss Madame Marois. I know you do too. She may have rubbed you the wrong way but she sure did wake people up.

Pauline is one radical woman. I still remember her stern handshake a few years back and that's when I knew this was a woman on a mission. Her star has dimmed but has her influence on young Quebec minds also diminished? I'm not so sure, because history repeats. Nothing under the sun is new. Even news.

Premier Philippe Couillard has put Saint-Félicien on the map! I hope now the town zoo will be a hot destination for other parties to attend. It's a cute zoo. Right Judy?

Exuma. Awww. If teleportation were a reality, I'd be there right now. Until then, I'll add places to my bucket list and to the list of where I'd like to be posthumously sprinkled. Mind you, it's goose break season, so I'll definitely keep my Bahamas tan. Aho!

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Top Cooking prize for Cree Culinary Student

Story by Akiva Levitas

Nemaska resident Katrina Orr, a first-year culinary management student at Canadore College in North Bay, took home top prize at the Decadence Gala's Battle of Ontario February 22 along with team member William Arnaud. Arnaud and Orr, a mother of four, impressed the judges and gala participants with their dish of pan-seared Arctic char and a maple syrup brûlée with kimchi and bannock.

The Canadian Food and Wine Institute organized the contest, in which five pairs of students from colleges across Ontario had to win over five celebrity chef judges and the participants of the Decadence Gala. The panel judges' votes counted for half of the score with participants giving the other half.

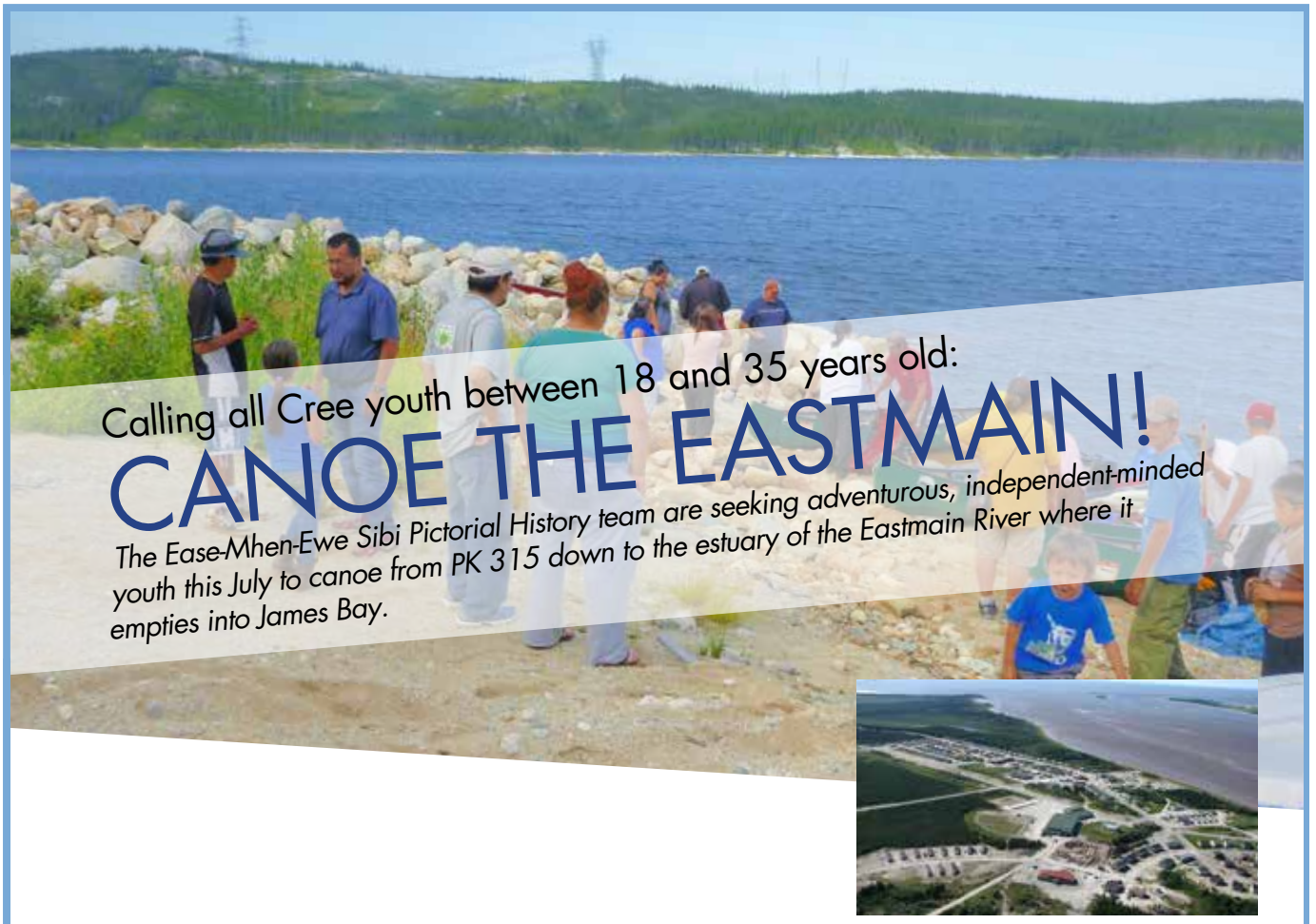
The final tally had the Canadore College team ahead by only three points. "I think the reason why a lot of people liked our dish was because it was very simple," Orr explained. "It was basically bread, coleslaw, and fish." Orr credits the simplicity of the dish because the lack of competing flavours made for a sumptuous meal.

This year's panel included TV personalities Anna Olson, International pastry chef Richard Braunauer, author and entertainer Ted Reader and International Food Olympics award-winner chef John Cirillo. Along with their prize of a complete set of Le Creuset cookware and a Garland Canada Induction cook top, Arnaud and Orr received congratulations from Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Jay Aspin.

The fourth edition of Niagara College Canada's Decadence Gala included the Battle of Ontario. The event brings together the many culinary institutes of Ontario for a weekend of family activities, competitions and, of course, decadent food focusing on ice wine and chocolate.

The success is a big boost to Orr's studies at Canadore College. "It's quite an achievement and it's quite impressive to have on a resume, that's for sure," said Orr.

Her children were thrilled and cheered her return home by yelling, "You won first place!" Orr's immediate goal is to complete her studies and begin working towards a red seal certification that recognizes 5,000 hours as a working apprentice.



Calling all Cree youth between 18 and 35 years old:

CANOE THE EASTMAIN!

The Ease-Mhen-Ewe Sibi Pictorial History team are seeking adventurous, independent-minded youth this July to canoe from PK 315 down to the estuary of the Eastmain River where it empties into James Bay.

WHAT?

The canoe expedition will take off from Robert Jimiken's camp and continue to the Eastmain estuary. The purpose of the voyage is to collect a photographic, case-history of the environmental impacts of the 1979 Eastmain River diversion and the EM-1 and EM-1A hydro-electric projects. In addition to gathering the visual data, the team will also meet and interview Cree users of the river about the importance of the Eastmain River basin to Cree cultural heritage.

WHY?

The project will culminate with the production of a coffee table book-length photographic guide detailing the changes to the landscape and telling brief stories of the Cree people who hunted, fished and trapped within the Eastmain River basin.

WHO?

All youth between 18 and 35 years old are invited to apply and join the project team and play a central part in this cultural heritage rejuvenation project. Special consideration given to those with:

- Experience in previous canoe expeditions.
- Knowledge of still photography and videography.
- Demonstrated leadership qualities.

To be considered, please send short one-page letter to Mr. Rusty Cheezo at rcheezo@tlb.sympatico.ca outlining your prior experience and explaining why you should be chosen to participate in this exciting project.
For more information call (819)-977-5166.

On the Map

Eeyou Istchee Tourist Attractions Win Big!

By Amy German

The Cree tourism industry is winning recognition as three organizations added trophies to their award shelves at the Tourisme Baie-James and Eeyou Istchee Tourism regional Grands Prix du Tourisme Québécois 2014. The Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute in Oujé-Bougoumou, the Mistissini Lodge and Wemindji's Maquatua Inn were all big winners at a March 27 gala in Lebel-sur-Quévillon.

According to Gaston Cooper from the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, the ACCI won the Gold Medal Tourism Attraction award for an attraction with less than 25,000 visitors per year, an impressive feat as this was the institute's first year of operation.

"We got this award because Tourisme Baie-James and Eeyou Istchee Tourism want to recognize some of the companies in the region for their efforts in attracting tourism," said Cooper.

He said the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA) nominated the institute and submitted a video message on the establishment and its work.

Cooper credited the award to the institute's hard work in bringing newcomers to Oujé-Bougoumou to visit the Aanischaaukamikw, something he said can be a "hard sell" because it is in a remote Cree community.

"We had a lot of visitors, both Native and non-Native, who came to Oujé-Bougoumou to visit our museum," Cooper observed. "We have just started and really didn't have much money as a non-profit organization for marketing. Not many do. Instead we had to rely a lot on social media and the media to do stories on us."

According to Cooper, visitors love the ACCI's collection of cultural antiquities, archeological finds and items that they were able to repatriate from other museums. In their visitor's log, visitors gushed about how the museum is an ambassador of Cree culture.

While many ACCI visitors over the last year have been Crees, there have also been a number of non-Natives who have walked through the institute's front doors, some hailing from Lac Saint-Jean, Quebec City, Montreal and Ottawa.

Cooper said what the ACCI did was pitch those who were already in the region for other purposes such as visiting an outfitting camp, but that this proved fruitful.

"It was like an added bonus for these people to come and visit the museum. This is something that we focused on and accomplished as we started getting more and more visitors and then repeat visitors," said Cooper.

Mistissini Lodge employee Patrick Forward was a winner in the human resources category. His colleague Gilbert Baribeau won the gold prize for a tourism employee while Forward pocketed the gold prize for tourism supervisor.

COTA also nominated the two for the awards ceremony.

"They said that they (COTA) felt that we would best represent this award. We didn't really do anything on our end except offer great service to our clients and I guess that this was noticed. We are really proud of these awards. Though they are for individuals, everything we do here is as a team and when we win, we all win," said Forward.

At the awards ceremony, the Maquatua Inn received the gold prize for a hotel with fewer than 40 units.

Tourisme Baie-James and Eeyou Istchee Tourism will be entering their winners for a regional prize but the winners for that event won't be announced until May at a gala in Laval.

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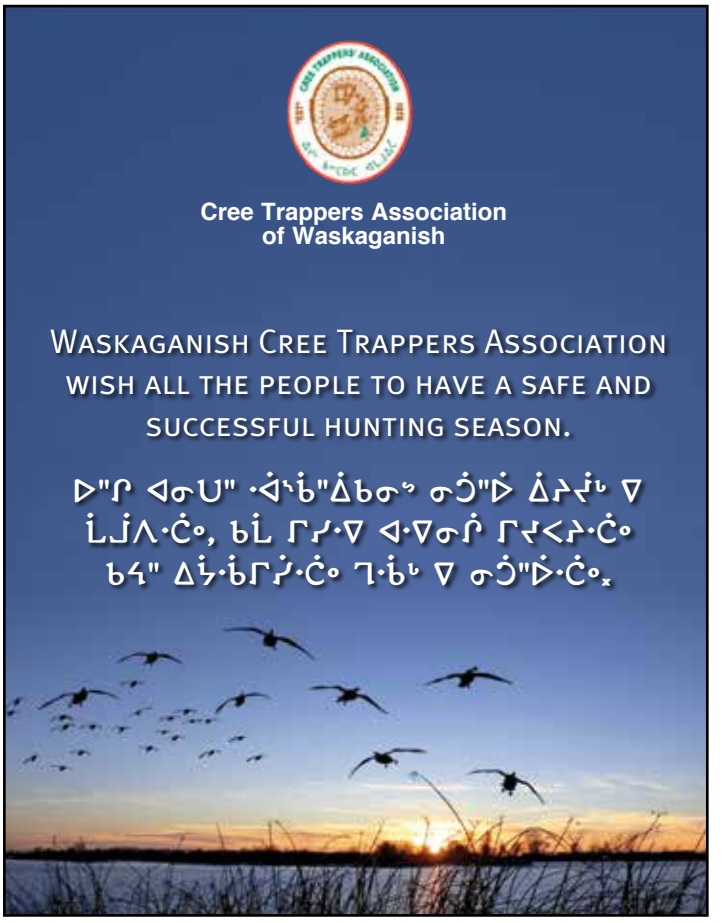
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Ducharme is top businesswoman

The Toronto Aboriginal Business Association (TABA) has named Theresa Ducharme businesswoman of the year. Ducharme, the founder and CEO of Lemon Cree Fitness, has collaborated with the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association to promote healthy and active lifestyles throughout James Bay. Although Lemon Cree began in Montreal only four years ago, the company has certified over 69 trainers who now work across Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario.

Theresa Ducharme and her daughter, actress Jessica Maaten, are congratulated by Rob Ford at the TABA awards.

Liberals win majority, Ungava

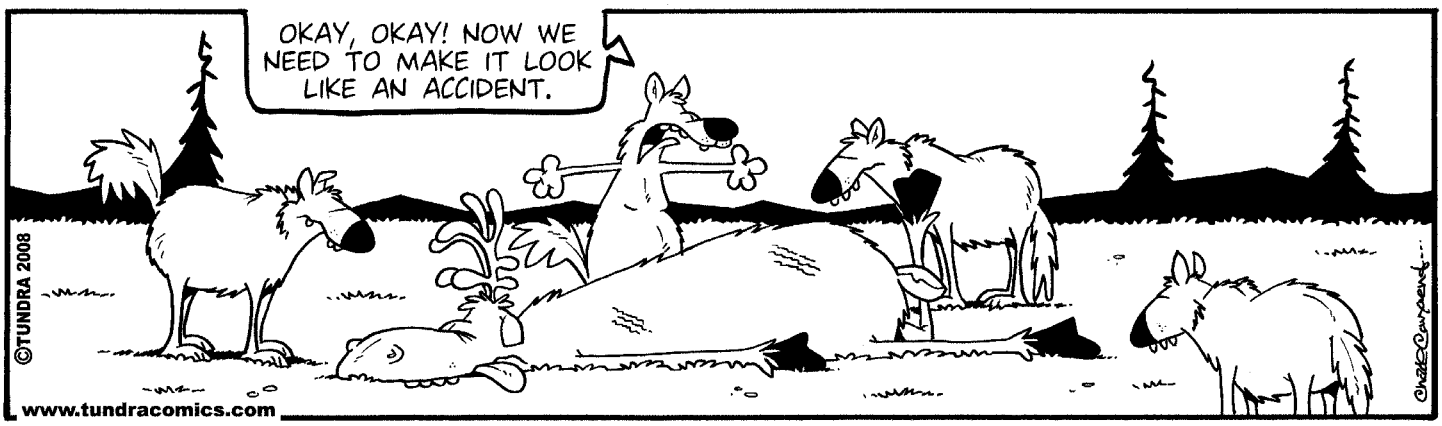
Philippe Couillard will be Quebec's new premier following a decisive election victory that saw Parti Québécois leader Pauline Marois resign after losing her own riding in the PQ's worst election result in 40 years.

In the Ungava riding that covers Eeyou Istchee, Liberal Jean Boucher defeated PQ incumbent Luc Ferland by 1,024 votes in the April 7 election. This is the first time a party other than the PQ will represent the Ungava riding since it was formed in 1981.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come congratulated Couillard in a press release the following day.

"We look forward to continuing our efforts to work together on issues of mutual concern and to do so with the same spirit of creativity with which we have addressed issues together in the past," said Coon Come."

Our collective initiatives have often resulted in solutions which address Cree concerns, while simultaneously benefitting all the peoples in our region and which ultimately have been positive for Quebecers as a whole."



More than campfire songs

SNAP and Tim Hortons team up to give Mistissini kids an unforgettable week

by Amy German

More than just scoring a double-double on the way to work, one of the biggest advantages having a Tim Hortons in your neighbourhood is that it offers the opportunity to send groups of kids to a Tim Horton children's camp.

From March 24-28, 46 Mistissini children from Grades 5-8 enjoyed a week of activities at the Camp des Voyageurs Tim Horton in Quyon, Quebec, including a day's outing to Ottawa.

According to local Tim Hortons owner Anthony MacLeod, the camp provided free lodging, transportation and meals to the children and their chaperones, courtesy of the Tim Horton Children's Foundation. MacLeod said this trip would not have happened had the SNAP (Stop Now and Plan cognitive-behavioural strategy program) team from the Mistissini Justice Department not stepped in with their organizational skills, which paved the road for this trip.

"It was great working with the Justice Department on this. Sheena (Costain), Selena (Jimmikin) and the rest of the team with (Director of Justice) Donald Nicholls did a great job. It was a collaborative effort but they did a large chunk of the work to get the kids organized to go. They are the ones who deserve to get a pat on the back," said MacLeod.

MacLeod said he and his sister Elaine were proud to have been able to give access to the camp to the kids and a third party group like SNAP because the basic premise of this kind of trip is to send children down south who would normally never get the chance.

According to Nicholls, who spent the week at the Quyon camp with his SNAP team so that they could offer the kids some SNAP lessons in conjunction with the camp, provided for a unique opportunity for the participants.

"Tim Hortons generally offers a three-day camp for children from nearby communities, but since we were coming from 10 hours away, they gave us an entire week. And because they were flexible with their three-day pro-

gramming, they told us that if we wanted to add something else that we could," said Nicholls.

His team is already operating in schools in Mistissini and Waswanipi to provide children and families with lessons on how to control anger by getting them to stop, think and plan positive alternatives before they act impulsively. This experience helped them design workshops at the camp to go along with the regular programming.

While Nicholls was planning the trip with his team, he ran into NDP MP Romeo Saganash, who organized a tour of Parliament for the Mistissini youth.

After that the group went on a guided tour of the National Gallery of Canada, followed by a visit to the Canadian Museum of History (formerly the Museum of Civilization) where they were given a guided tour and watched an IMAX flick, People of the North. The Eeyou Power Group bought the tickets for the Museum of History.

"We had some kids who had never been to Ottawa and we encouraged them to ask questions at the gallery and the museum. So they were able to ask any question they wanted with adults responding and explaining to them. It was great seeing the kids so engaged," said Nicholls.

According to Celina Jimikin, a childcare worker with the SNAP team, the camp experience was an adjustment for the kids.

"At the beginning it was hard for them because they had to leave their families for so long and they didn't have Internet or phones – but that was only for a day. After that they really adapted. They had games and learned how to work together with teamwork and how to communicate," said Jimikin.

Jimikin said the children marvelled at the buildings and took advantage of their opportunities,

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Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)
Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

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Our annual Goose Hunt is a very special time of the year - a time to go back to the land of our people to pursue our traditional way of life and to exercise the rights that our great leaders fought hard to have recognized - the rights to hunt waterfowl on our traditional territory in accordance with our customs, the right to rely on the land to feed our families as we have done since time immemorial, and to exercise our traditional customs like the "walking out ceremony."

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whether it was asking a question or interacting with an exhibit at the museum.

According to Sheena Costain, a SNAP Community Program Support Worker, the trip focussed on leadership skills, self-esteem and bullying. While many of the younger children were very familiar with the SNAP team and their lessons, those attending the high school had never encountered the program.

"We had never worked with the older kids before and so we gave them a brief on what SNAP was, how to calm your body down and all of those types of things. We also got them to understand the definition of bullying and the different types that exist – verbal, social, cyber and physical – and we got them to analyze it through answering questions and brainstorming," said Costain.

According to SNAP coordinator Dorothy Nicholls, "The kids who weren't part of the SNAP program, didn't know what to do. At first, they were a bit lost, but eventually started to participate."

To get kids to warm up to these important lessons about empathy and understanding, they engaged in fun yet poignant learning games. In one of them, Costain said she put a line of masking tape down the centre of a room and then had half of each group of children stand on one side and call out statements. If the child felt the statement applied to them, they had to step on the line.

"You start out with things like who is wearing polka-dot underwear and maybe half of them step on the line. But you can slowly get into more serious things like who has been bullied in the last month. It is about creating empathy with the kids and letting them understand that there is common ground there. When I asked who has been bullied

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in the last week, almost all of them stepped on the line," said Costain.

This way these children knew what it was like to step into someone else's shoes.

To develop their sense of self-esteem, Costain said she divided the kids into groups of 10 and had them write another child's name on a piece of paper. They then had to pass it around their circle, with each child adding one positive thing about the person on the paper.

"By the end of it they had all of these nice things about themselves. And this is good because when they feel low they now have these lists of what other people think about them and how important you are in this world," said Costain.

According to Tim Hortons Camp Counselor Marie-Frédérike Scott, the SNAP activities blended wonderfully with the camp's regular programming because the lessons being offered by both groups shared similar values and themes.

"We have a program that we call 'GREAT beads' and these are values that we want to teach them at the camp. The G stands for goal setting and achievement. The R stands for responsible leadership. The E is for environmental awareness. The A is for adventure and creativity and the T is for teamwork and friendship. These are the values that we push through all of our activities," said Scott.

At the same time, the camp is also about fun. During the winter months, the camp offers snowshoeing, archery, photography, treasure hunts, night hikes, campfires and a talent night.

What stood out most to Scott about the Cree trip was the talent night.

"So many of them participated and some had really wonderful talents, with the skits or songs that they performed," she said. "You could see how much they were enjoying this. Some of the chaperones participated – one couple, Emmett and his wife Lizzie, played guitar and sang a song in Cree."

Not surprisingly, Scott said they excelled in many of the wilderness-related activities. The kids even offered to show Scott and her fellow counsellors how to make rabbit snares.

But the outdoors wasn't the only thing they were familiar with.

"In our winter survival camp we always make bannock. Most of the kids from other schools won't know what it is until we show it to them but everyone seemed to know it. The leaders on the trip all remarked that we were using a great recipe and they would use it at home. This was really fun to see, they knew what we were talking about," said Scott.

After an eventful five days at the camp and two days on the road, the children returned to Mistissini, all thanking MacLeod for the trip and being happy to have gone.

Nicholls hopes to repeat the trip in years to come, perhaps with children from different communities throughout Eeyou Istchee.

There is a great honour in passing on traditional knowledge to our younger generations.

The Niskamoon Corporation board of directors and staff hope you all have the chance this goose break to reconnect to the land and pass on traditional wisdom.

Have a safe and happy goose break!

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Have a safe and great goose hunt from all of us here at the Nation

Bringing birthing back

Birthing at home within Quebec's borders

by Amy German

Many Crees of a certain age can remember the births of their family members for the simple reason that most babies at one time were born at home.

While childbirth has largely taken place in medical centres for the last few decades, a movement among Aboriginal groups advocates returning this event to the home, and this is why the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) has just launched the Aboriginal Midwifery Toolkit.

The NACM launched the toolkit at the Centre de développement communautaire autochtone à Montréal March 28 in conjunction with the group Quebec Native Women to provide concrete knowledge and tools for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who want to return birth and midwifery to the community.

According to NACM coordinator Valérie Perrault, the toolkit was developed after the group tested the level of interest among First Nation communities across the country. Perrault said that 120 communities expressed the desire to go down this path in various capacities.

Narrowing it down to three communities in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario, the NACM focused on what the needs would be for each community to create the needed tools and skills.

"There was a real need to get more concrete tools in place to bring births back to these communities to or at least bring prenatal care back as births may not be sustainable," said Perrault.

The toolkit is found on the NACM website. It serves as an interactive online resource offering fact sheets, videos that describe the situation in each province and podcasts that describe the journey to become a midwife. They feature both student and working midwives.

Also available are site-specific sections that address pertinent legislation, governance and funding options, tools to assess community specific maternal health needs and ways to develop midwifery services within Aboriginal communities.

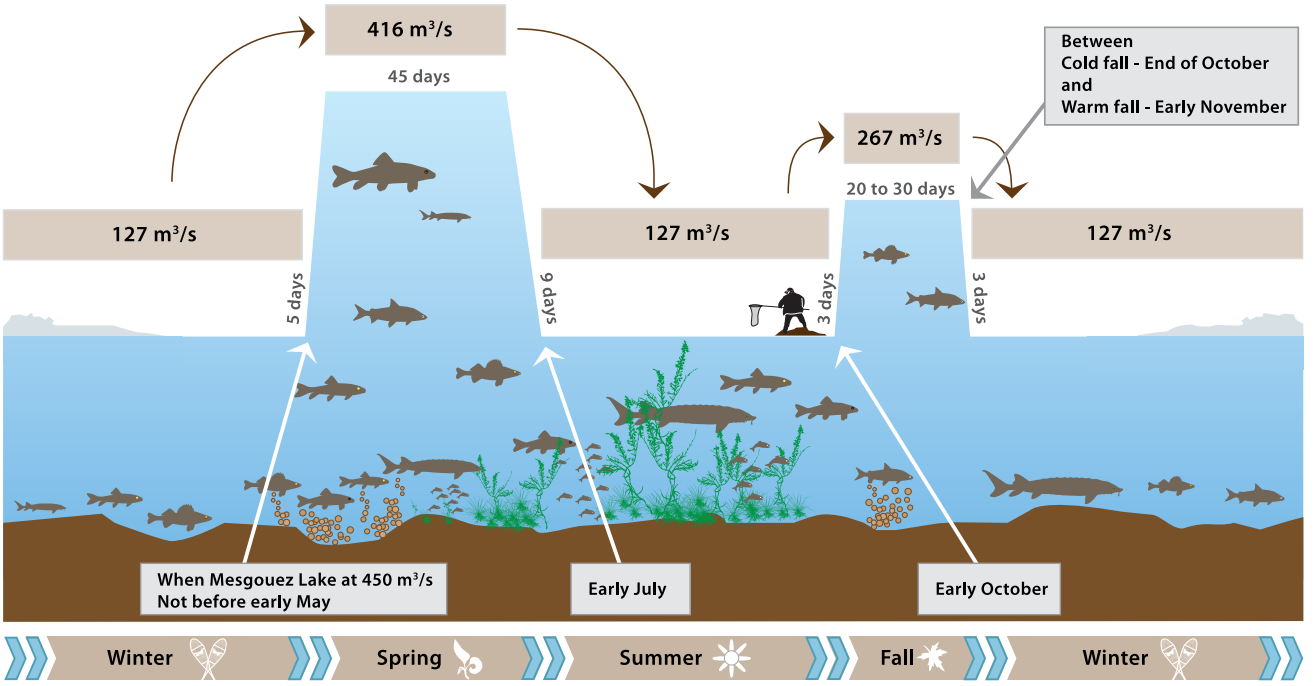
"It can be a complicated subject and while there are similarities between the communities, at the same time each community is so very specific. There are also vast differences between the situations, between the needs of urban Aboriginals and those in remote communities, there are also fly-in communities and communities of different sizes. So it is very hard to try to capture that whole diversity and still have information that is still useful for specific communities," said Perrault.

The cultural significance of returning births to the community can have an enormous impact on the mother because it can be very difficult to execute a traditional

Continued on page 23

Hydlo and FRIENDS unplugged

Ecological Instream Flow:
Being waterly correct!



The Rupert River flows downstream of Rupert Dam. Hydro-Québec will be increasing the amount of water released to support spring spawning beginning in early May, the first change since May 2010.

An instream flow released year round through the spillway gates contributes to ensuring Hydro-Québec keeps its commitment to preserve fish habitat and the river's continued use for hunting, fishing, trapping and boating.

Rupert River Water Management Board

The Board oversees the respect of the Ecological Instream Flow regime. The Board counts two Cree members—Mr. Lawrence Jimiken, representing Nemaska, and Mr. Thomas Hester, representing Waskaganish—as well as Mr. Bryan Craik, representing the Grand Council of the Crees.

Hydlo and Friends is a radio show broadcast on JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke MacLeod and Luc Duquette, discuss the environmental follow-up activities related to the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project, as well as the concerns of land users with regard to Hydro-Québec's facilities and activities.

Next show:
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Opening My Eyes

by Ernest Webb

I've heard my grandfather say that you need to wash the sleep from your eyes and face in order to hunt successfully. There's always a wash basin in a tent or cabin that people use for their ablutions. Some basins are elaborate flower covered porcelain beauties, others are old banged up metal mixing bowls that've seen better days. They tend to be placed near the wood stove, usually behind on the floor or table. Sometimes a bar of soap sits in the basin waiting for the next face to wash. No matter the state of the basin, it takes on an important role in the hunt.

I've seen many people do this and have taken no notice of it. It was just a mundane task... just one more thing you have to do in your daily life. On one of our filming travels we were guests at a camp during spring goose season. In the morning I went to our host's cabin to see what the plans were for the day. He was alone in the cabin waiting for the rest of the family to show up in the next few days. He's younger than I am and has the air of an old soul.

As I walked in he was pulling out a homemade side table to the middle of the floor beside the stove. He slid a chair in front and picked up the basin from the stove and put it on the table. He pulled a towel from the drying rack, flicked it onto his shoulder and sat down.

He started washing his hands. When he got to his forearms I noticed there was something different, so I kept watching. The way he cupped the water and rinsed his arms made it look like he was doing something solemn. A ritual.

When he got to his face he lifted the water in his hands and put it to his face. He wasn't splashing it on. It was as if the water was a delicate substance he was putting on his face. From that day on, I look at that daily act differently and try to emulate his manner when I go hunting.

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Calling all square dance loving Crees!
Come and square dance in Eastmain, the square dance capital of Eeyou Istchee, you are invited.

WHAT?

The Square Dance Festival aim to preserve Cree cultural heritage by documenting Cree square dancers showcasing their artistic talents in performing square dance sets originated by our ancestors. A DVD will be produced documenting the performance of twelve traditional dance sets.

WHY?

Although square dancing is not a Cree originated tradition, since square dancing was introduced to the Cree by the early fur traders, the Cree have adopted square dancing and it has become part of the Cree cultural heritage. The Square Dance Festival's aim to preserve this heritage and pass it on to future generations of square dance-loving Crees.

WHO?

Two dance groups of six couples each will be expected to demonstrate and perform the specific dance sets as originated by our Cree ancestors. With the assistance of knowledgeable square dance-loving elders, the dance groups will be instructed on the choreography of the tradition Cree dance and on July 30, 31, August 1, 2, 2014, the dancers' performances will be recorded to put into a DVD.

SQUARE DANCERS WHO WILL BE SELECTED TO PERFORM THE SPECIFIC SQUARE DANCE SETS MUST:

- be in good physical condition as they will be expected to perform continuously for approximately fifteen minutes.
- being knowledgeable about the dance sets they will be expected to perform.
- be able to dance in both a forward and backward motion.
- be willing to follow the instruction of a knowledgeable elder in the choreography of the dance sets they will be expected to perform.
- be willing to contribute towards a group performance.

If you wish to contribute towards this effort of showcasing and preserving our Cree cultural heritage, please contact Mr. Rusty Cheezo by phone at **819 977 5166** or by email at **rcheezo@tlb.sympatico.ca**

Continued from page 17

"It is not just about the birth itself but also preparing the woman to understand how to take care of herself."

sacred ceremony in a biomedical environment. Having culturally significant care is something that Perrault has said that her clients have really valued.

Even in the case of higher-risk pregnancies necessitating evacuation, midwife care is still relevant. Perrault said this is often how it will work in areas like Nunavik where there has been a successful midwifery program and midwives are an essential part of a multidisciplinary team.

According to Sam Gull, the Assistant Executive Director of Nishiyuu Muyipimaatsiiun at the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), returning the births of Cree babies to Eeyou Istchee has long been in the planning.

Gull's mandate within the Nishiyuu Muyipimaatsiiun department is to add traditional medicine and traditional healing practices to childbirth practices. More specifically, he ensures proper research is in place.

He is currently working on a five-year strategic plan based on a pilot project to gain traditional birthing knowledge from Cree Elders.

"What we have done is that we set out a target to interview 100 Elders and within those interviews we are asking them what happened in the past as far as they can remember or the stories that they heard about birthing practices. It is not just about the birth itself but also preparing the woman to understand how to take care of herself from the time that she knows that she is pregnant and using the rites of passage as soon as she gives birth," said Gull.

Gull said that the CBHSSJB has conducted 70 interviews. At the

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moment they are still categorizing the themes discussed in the interviews.

The bigger goal is to design a program to educate new parents from the onset of pregnancy that involves grandparents to help teach new parents traditional roles in how to take care of themselves.

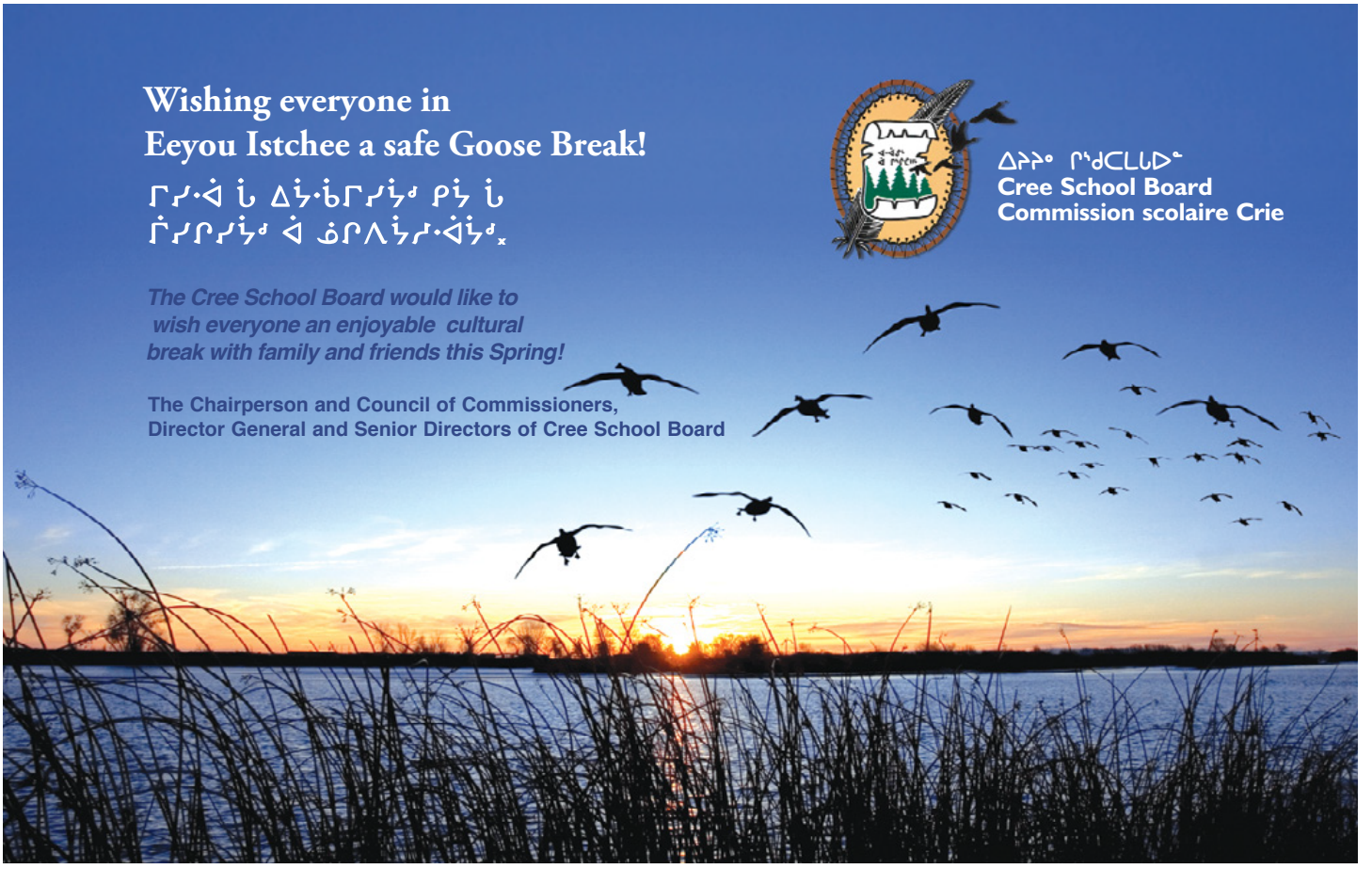
Cree births now number more than 400 every year in hospitals in Val d'Or, Chibougamau and, in more complicated instances, Montreal.

"Last year there was an understanding was made with the government that we would be bringing back birthing centres into the community. There are talks of definitely having one birthing centre in either Mistissini or Chisasibi but hopefully we can have both," said Gull.

Where Nishiyuu Muyipimaatsiiun comes into play is for when the facility is created, a midwife will be able to follow the new mother from the very beginning. Gull said that the program they would like to create would use both medical and traditional knowledge to make sure that the mother is healthy as possible.

To recruit midwives, program development has been in talks since 2010 with the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, where the province's only program exists, but it couldn't move ahead until there was a plan for a birthing centre.

Now that a concrete plan is in place, developing an English-language program at the university for Crees is closer to reality.


Wishing everyone in
Eeyou Istchee a safe Goose Break!
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The Cree School Board would like to
wish everyone an enjoyable cultural
break with family and friends this Spring!
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European ice summit

Team Nation competes with Europe's best in Swiss hockey tourney

by Daniel Coyle

An all-star Bantam team from Eeyou Istchee competed against Europe's best 13- to 15-year-old players in the fourth Geneva Future Hockey Challenge during the last week of March. Team Nation managed only a tie but gained a world of experience in the elite tournament.

Team Nation, which competed in the U15 ELITE division, was quickly assembled after an invitation was received in early February for a First Nations team enter the competition.

Coached by Jeff Spencer and Fred Perowne, a long-time skipper of the Cree Nation Bears, it took perfect timing and hard work to make Team Nation a reality.

The host team, Genève-Servette, made the overture to see if a team of First Nations players would be interested in participating in the tournament, explained Spencer. "Roger Bastien from SportSelect International told them they should get in touch with me, and after that everything happened pretty fast."

Spencer enlisted Christian Flamand, whose experience organizing the annual Tournoi des Nations hockey tournament proved to be invaluable.

"We organized a selection camp in La Tuque, because it is pretty close to Mistissini where the Cree Nations Bear play," explained Spencer. "We invited over 50 players and made the final selections February 28."

Ten young players from Eeyou Istchee, primarily members of the Cree Nation Bears, made the cut. They included goaltenders Jacob Dioszeghy of Chisasibi and Jake Simard of Oujé-Bougoumou; defencemen Tyrese Neeposh of Mistissini, Donovan Wadden

Cree youth enjoying fondue in Gruyere, Switzerland.

of Chisasibi, Fabian Petagumskum and Marcus Petagumskum of Whapmagoostui; and forwards Derian Blackned Hester of Waskaganish, Linden Spencer of Eastmain, Cameron Bearskin of Chisasibi and Marshall Stewart of Wemindji.

"It was an amazing experience for our boys," said Spencer. "It gave them the chance to see that dreams are possible."

Team Nation organizers Christian Flamand, Roger Anthony Bastien and Jeff Spencer.

"The boys showed real commitment and enthusiasm for participating in the tournament," continued Spencer. "And the people at Genève-Servette, without them it would not have been possible. They sponsored our travel costs and helped arrange some side trips for the boys that made the trip even more special."

Former NHL player Michal Grosek greeted the young players upon arrival in Switzerland. Coached by Ted Nolan while playing with the Buffalo Sabres, Grosek was eager to spend time with Team Nation, joining them in the dressing room to talk hockey and impart a little of his experience, including being a part of the Sabres team that came with an overtime goal of winning the Stanley Cup in 1999.

Team Nation faced off against some of the strongest club teams in

Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James
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Keep smiling!
Garde ton sourire!
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- **Miyupimaatisiiun includes having good oral health.**
- **You can prevent problems by bringing your child to the dental clinic at the age of one!**
- **Then follow with twice-yearly visits to fight oral disease and stay healthy.**

Team Nation.

Europe, including Jokerit, a Helsinki-based hockey program that has produced some of Finland's best players; Minsk-based Dinamo Belarus; a team of selects from the Russian Ice Hockey Federation; Suisse Ice Hockey Lausanne, one of Switzerland's leading hockey development programs; and Genève-Servette, the host team for the tournament and the sponsors who made Team Nation's participation possible.

It proved to be tough going on the ice for Team Nation as they played to a 1-1 draw against Belarus Dinamo, but failed to pick up a victory in their other tournament games. However, the boys certainly gained respect for their never-quit attitude and loyalty to each other, particularly during their game against the Russian Federation. The Russians, aggressors in multiple on-ice altercations, quickly discovered that First Nations boys would not be pushed around on the ice.

"It was like Canada/Russia in 1987 all over again," said Spencer, in reference to the fight-filled game between Canada and Russia during the 1987 World Juniors.

The Russians would win the game, but unhappy with officiating through-

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Merci à nos commanditaires

James Bay Cree Communications Society

out the tournament, eventually pulled out of the tourney.

Despite the team's on-ice challenges, Spencer is extremely happy with the experience his young charges gained from taking part in the tourney and excited about future opportunities to provide young First Nations hockey players with valuable international experience.

"It was an amazing experience for our boys," said Spencer. "It gave them the chance to see that dreams are possible."

Cree Youth on Team Nation:

G Jacob Dioszeghy Chisasibi
G Jake Simard Oujebougoumou
D Tyrese Neeposh Mistissini
D Donovan Wadden Chisasibi
D Fabian Petagumskum Whapmagoostui
D Marcus Petagumskum Whapmagoostui
F Derian Blackned Hester Waskaganish
F Linden Spencer Eastmain
F Cameron Bearskin Chisasibi
F Marshall Stewart Wemindji
Coaches: Jeff Spencer & Fred Perowne
General Manager: Christian Flamand

Captain Fabian Petagumskum during Geneva Servette Division I Pro Playoff Game

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Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)
Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

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Chisasibi takes cup

Thunder Eagles claim provincial hockey championship

by Daniel Coyle

The Chisasibi Thunder Eagles are the 2014 Quebec Provincial Midget A Hockey Champions.

After a difficult start to the tournament, held in Candiac April 3-6, the Thunder Eagles capped a heart-stopping run with a 4-2 win over Lac Mégantic Turmel to claim the championship banner.

For the Thunder Eagles, their journey to the championship began with a dominant regular season in the JBMHL, during which they went a perfect 12-0 and outscored their opponents by an incredible 75-26 margin.

Led by rookie coach Charly Washipabano, the impressive regular season campaign earned the team a berth in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Regional Championship in La Sarre, which they began by besting the Val d'Or Senators 5-3 in the tournament opener. Chisiasibi skated to a 0-0 draw against Wemindji Paint Hills before posting dominant victories over Genivar Amos and the Senators to earn a spot in the Regional Final against Alarm La Sarre.

The Thunder Eagles held a one-goal lead entering the third period before La Sarre knotted the game at 2-2 to force overtime. But the Thunder Eagles wasted no time putting an end to La Sarre's season as Lawrence Spencer potted the winner at the 32-second mark of the extra frame to propel Chisasibi into the provincial championship.

The road got rockier for the boys from Chisasibi when they took the ice in Candiac, as the Thunder Eagles suffered their first losses of the 2013-14 season, starting with a humiliating 8-2 defeat at the hands of the Turmel.

"It was heart-wrenching. It was a shocker. It was an eye-opener," coach Washipabano said of the blowout. "The boys and I knew it was going to be tough. But that really dug into our team because we were not used to that at all. And then, the second game, we were down 5-1 after two periods of play. And that's when things changed."

The Thunder Eagles stormed back from a four-goal deficit in the third period of their second game against the Berthier Aigles before falling 5-4. But the comeback gave the Thunder Eagles a much-needed confidence boost.

The team once again needed third-period heroics in their quarterfinal battle against the hometown Delson Senators. Chisasibi started the third period down 3-2 but quickly took a one-goal lead after goals by Johnny Wapachee and Vincent McDonald, his third of the game.

It looked like the Thunder Eagles would once again need overtime when the Senators knotted the game at 4-4 with just 91 seconds left. But Rupert Snowboy would be the hero as he scored the winner for Chisasibi with just one second remaining in the third period, sending the Thunder Eagles to the Final Four of the tourney.

The Thunder Eagles got off to a fast start in their semi-final tilt against the Olympiens de Shawinigan-Sud, scoring a pair of first period goals, followed by three second-period markers, including Spencer's second goal of the game to extinguish an Olympien rally in the middle stanza. Shawinigan-Sud would score again in the third, but it was not enough as the Thunder Eagles hung on for a 5-4

MOCREEBEC COUNCIL OF THE CREE NATION

On February 13th, 2014, Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come addressed the MoCreebec people informing them of the Grand Council's commitment to partner with the MoCreebec people toward a path of reconciliation into the family of the Cree Nation. He spoke of hope for a resolution to the long-standing issues and difficulties MoCreebec people have faced as beneficiaries of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA).

Grand Chief Coon Come clearly emphasized Grand Council's support to go full steam ahead in an effort to resolve the MoCreebec file. In his letter dated June 17th, 2013 to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, the Grand Chief stated *"the time has come to resolve…the MoCreebec case through negotiations."*

Acting Chief
ALLAN JOLLY

MoCreebec and the Grand Council have begun a process to lobby and seek political support from all levels of governments, including First Nations in Quebec, Ontario, other Aboriginal organizations, and both levels of government in Ottawa and Ontario.

MoCreebec is focused on a two-track political strategy:

1) Dealing with the federal government in respect to its fiduciary responsibilities and obligations to MoCreebec people as status Indians, and;

2) Working with the Grand Council to find ways and means in making it easier for JBNQA beneficiaries living in Moose Factory and Moosonee to access JBNQA benefits.

The road will not be easy, but the Grand Council and MoCreebec are united and are working together in regards to their respective commitments to do all they can in carrying forward these agendas.

MoCreebec has come a long way since the association was established back in 1980. MoCreebec offers a variety of programs and services designed to serve the MoCreebec community, in areas such as health, housing, employment, education, and communication.

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win and a berth in the final against Lac Mégantic.

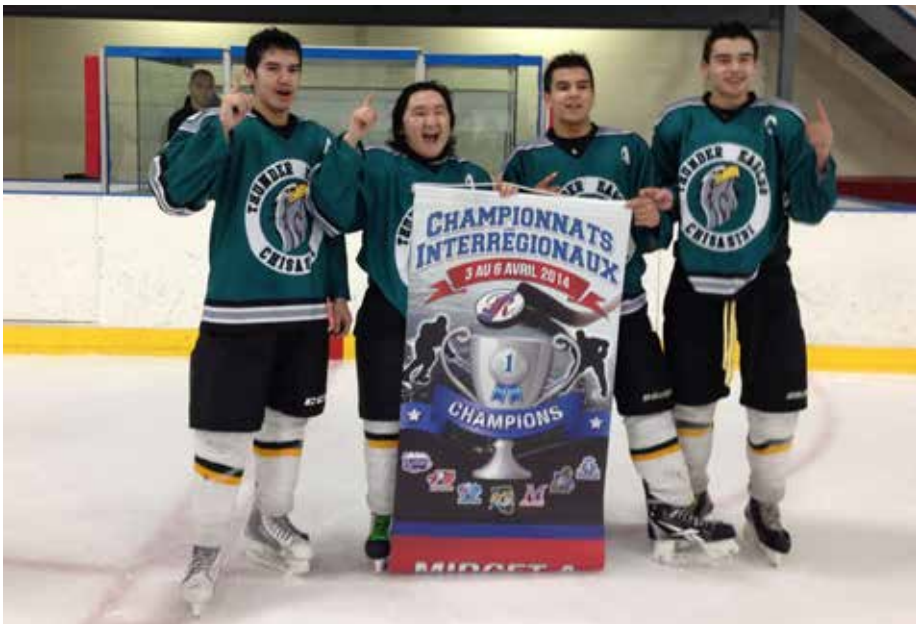
After a scoreless first period in the final, the Thunder Eagles fell behind in the second as Lac Mégantic potted a pair of markers. But the butterflies that had plagued the bellies of Chisasibi's boys during their opening loss to Lac Mégantic had clearly been expelled.

Looking confident, the Thunder Eagles responded to Lac Megantic's second goal with a goal by Craig Cookish just 11 seconds later, swinging the momentum of the game in the Thunder Eagles' favour. Chisasibi deadlocked the game when Tristan Georgekish scored in the 12th minute, setting up a third-period showdown.

Chisasibi fans held their breath when the Thunder Eagles were called for a pair of penalties early in third period, giving Lac Megantic a 1:18 two-man advantage. But the Thunder Eagles defence stood tall, killing off both penalties and creating a sense in the packed arena that Chisasibi was destined for a championship.

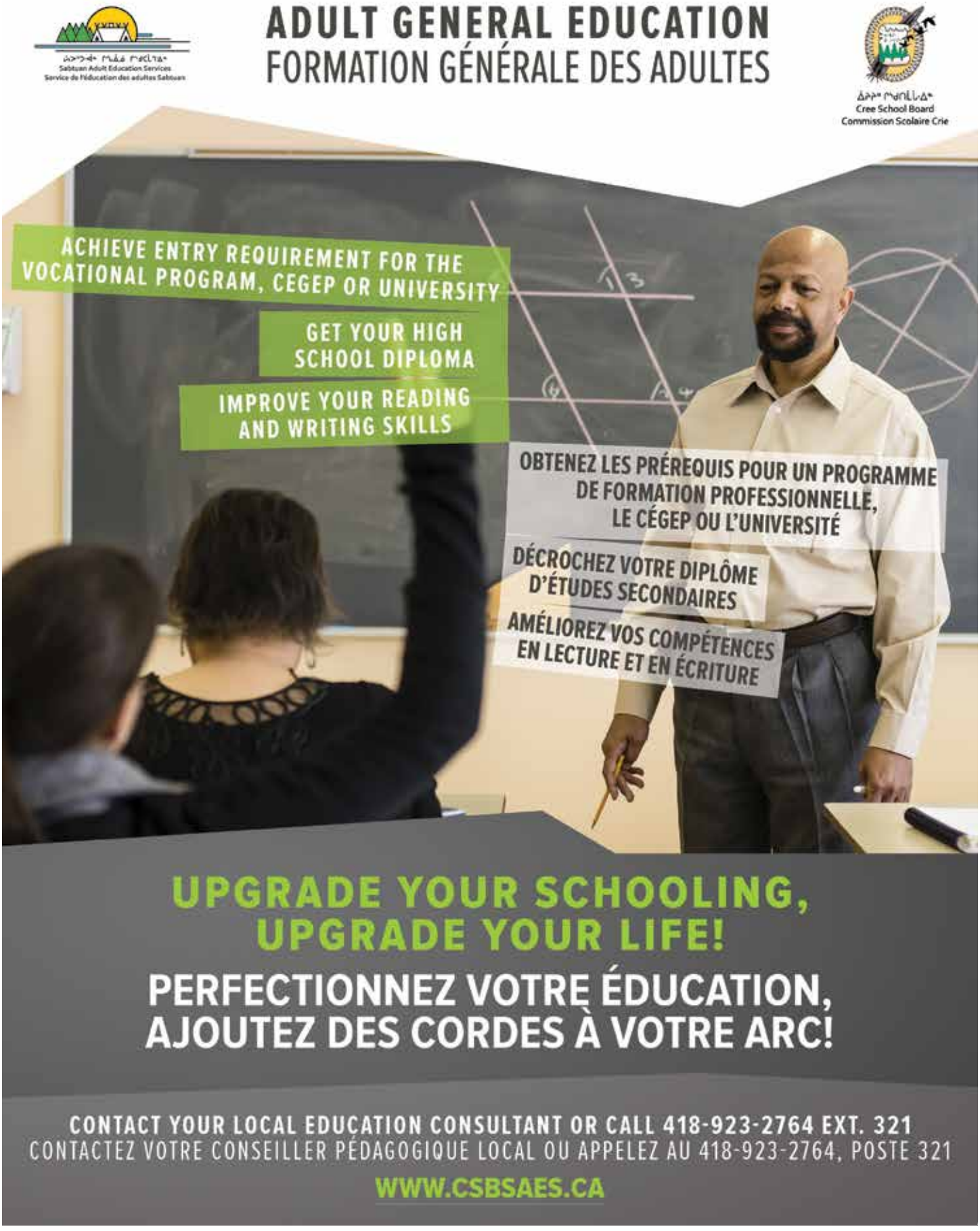
That destiny was achieved when Lawrence Spencer scored a pair late in the game, clinching the championship for the Thunder Eagles. The club's victory was cheered on by the local crowd, and the team was met by adoring fans on their return home, championship banner in hand.

"We won when it mattered most," said a beaming Washipabano. "Three games that showed everyone, not just in the Cree Nation, that these boys made it there for a reason. Opposing coaches, players, tournament organizers all echoed to me the same thing: that we were, as they say in French, a 'beautiful' team."



Captain Fabain Petagumskum on Ice during Geneve Servette Division 1 Pro Playoff Game

#31 Felix Sutherland
#33 Nathan Fireman-Cox
#9 Lawrence Spencer
#11 Matthew Kanatewat
#13 Craig Cookish
#17 Vincent MacDonald
#19 Gerald Herodier
#21 Harley Jolly
#27 Tristan Georgekish
#55 Rupert "Jack" Snowboy
#61 Eric Sam
#71 Ronald Washapabano
#77 Brian Cookish
#79 Johnny Wapachee
#91 Lyle Otter
#93 Robert Sam-Fleming
Coach: Charly Washipabano
Assistant Coach: Tommy Sam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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

An old warrior has gone home

by Xavier Kataquapit

If the comings and goings of people can be compared to a pebble tossed into a lake and the resulting ripples that radiate infinitely, then I would say that the passing of John R. Bradley, a member of Six Nations, will bless many with a spirit of good nature and humour for generations. His life was all about sacrifice, dedication and doing his very best for family and friends. He passed away April 1 at the age of 94.

When I first met him many years ago through my friends John Jr. and Patty Bradley, I was impressed with his quick wit and kindness. In his presence, I found myself laughing most of the time. He had a special knack for making people feel good. As a matter of fact, all of his children share that trait of a special type of humour.

John Bradley Sr. lost his father early in his life but thankfully his mother Emma (Montour) Bradley raised him, brother Bill and his four sisters – Edith (King), Helen (Tobicoe), Voila (Bradt) and Lorraine – on the family farm in Six Nations.

Although life was hard for everybody back in the 1930s and 1940s, John Sr. had the comfort of his large family, the produce and production of a 90-acre farm and a tight-knit community revolving around Six Nations and Hagersville. He knew education was a big deal and he persevered with the many kilometre daily walks in all kinds of weather to elementary and high school in Hagersville, near Hamilton, Ontario.

At 19, the Second World War called him and Bill to service. Amazingly, he endured, survived and excelled in carrying out his duties as a Sergeant on a 25-pound gun during five years and three months in England, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. As his son, John Jr., confided, he left a boy and came back a man with a lifetime of experiences. Brother Bill, although wounded, also returned. As a life-long member of Hagersville Branch 164 of the Royal Canadian Legion, John Sr. was one of the few remaining Native veterans of the Second World War.

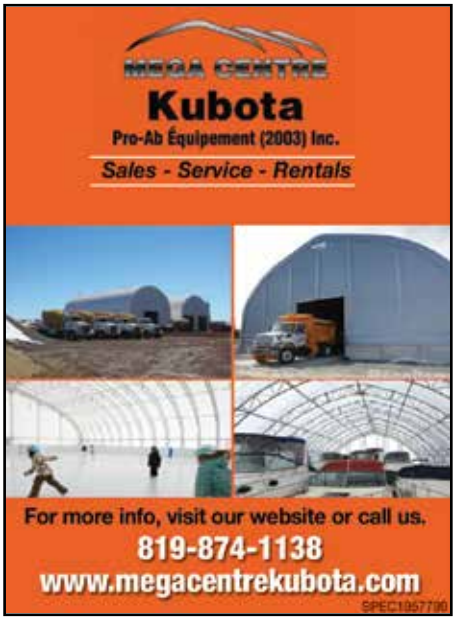
On their return to Six Nations, John and Bill went back to work on the farm. John also had a job as a fireman at the army camp outside of Hagersville. Due to his respect and friendship with Natives and non-Natives alike, he secured a position with the Canadian Gypsum Company in their local mine. He had much success and worked with the company for 38 years.

Through his childhood and his quest for education, his dedication and service to Canada in the most terrorizing conditions you can imagine for almost six years in Europe and his return to start a long-term career and family, John Sr. always saw himself as a person who could survive and succeed.

There was nothing complicated about John Sr and what you saw was what you got. He didn't see the colour of people in any detrimental way. As Martin Luther King said, he valued, "the content of their character." John Sr. passed on a great work ethic, the importance of honesty and a gentle sense of humour to his own children. They carry on that that sense of character and they include: John Jr. (Patty) Bradley, Russell (Debbie) Bradley, Laurie (Fred) Lambert, Ronald Bradley (Elsie) and Luanne (Chris) Martin. He has also blazed a trail for many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and a great-great-grandchild.

Lucky for John Sr., when he was a young man, he found a secret weapon that turned a very good man into a spectacular human being. That secret weapon was his wife Norma (Russell) Bradley, who stood by him for 65 years, on the long and steady walk which was his life trail. Their love of life, family, friends and community has endeared them both to so many. Thankfully, Norma will continue to be a part of the many lives that she and John Sr. have touched.

When his great-granddaughter Brynn Vokes raised her voice in song during the memorial there was not a dry eye in the building. These were not tears of sadness but of joy for a life well lived and hope for the future. An old warrior has gone home.



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Meetings in Mistissini: Alcoholics Anonymous, Tuesday's Hope Meeting, are at 7PM at the Mamou-Wechidodow Building Amisk Street. **Alanon Meetings** are on Tuesdays as well at 7PM at the Mamou-Wechidodow Building Amisk Street. **Alateen Meetings** are on Mondays at 3:30PM at the Reception Centre 282 Main Street. These meetings are all open meetings.

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Cultural Manual for Foster and Adoptive parents of Aboriginal Children, launched at the last Gathering of the NETWORK on October 3... CHECK IT OUT! www.reseaumtl-network.com/eng/Portals/5/Cultural%20Manual.pdf

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The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688 (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec:
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Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

Concordia University, Montreal:

The Centre for Native Education has changed its name to the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC). The new name is inclusive of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the centre serves and recognizes its role as a resource for the Concordia community. For any further details contact: aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 ext. 7327.

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